



Women Supporting Women

**Public Health Committee
Public Hearing - March 28, 2022**

Testimony from PoliticaCT supporting
SB-477, *An Act Concerning the Public Health of Residents of the State*
Submitted by: Janée Woods Weber, President

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, ranking members Hwang, Somers and Petit and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 477, *An Act Concerning the Public Health of Residents of the State* - in particular, Section 7.

PoliticaCT is a membership-based statewide organization whose mission is to build a more progressive Connecticut through issue advocacy for smart public policies.

PoliticaCT supports SB 477 because it contains provisions to address the crisis of community gun violence in Connecticut. Section 7 of this bill is especially worthy of your consideration. Establishing a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to coordinate the funding and implementation of evidence-based, evidenced-informed, community-centric gun programs and strategies to reduce community gun violence in the state is a much needed and necessary step for developing strategies that will uplift communities harmed by gun violence.

Our state must invest more to save lives lost to gun violence, which is an urgent and dangerous public health crisis. Gun homicides have reached a new and devastating high, nearly double the level in 2018. The situation is even more stark for communities of color, with people of color disproportionately being victims of gun homicide. For example, only 10% of our state's population is Black yet approximately 56% of our homicide victims are Black. Young Black men in Connecticut are almost 39 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than similarly aged white men. Black and Hispanic children are routinely exposed to gun violence. Our youngest, most vulnerable residents are living childhoods where they witness shootings, hear gunshots, and know friends, relatives and family members who have been shot or killed. This is unacceptable.

We are long overdue for legislation that centers community and works with community toward curbing the existence and growth of gun violence in our state. PoliticaCT urges support and passage of Senate Bill 477.